Thank you for your ongoing and diligent efforts to appropriately rebalance limited resources in order to support our nation’s highest priorities. As you begin to craft the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2017, we respectfully urge you to include sufficient funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) programs, in particular the COPS Hiring program. These programs are critical to ensuring that state and local law enforcement have the tools, personnel, and resources necessary to protect and serve their communities.

The Byrne JAG and COPS programs are the cornerstone of our federal justice assistance programs. Since their inception, the Byrne JAG and COPS programs have enabled law enforcement agencies to form vital partnerships among communities and law enforcement officers, combat criminal activities, and develop and implement problem-solving and crime prevention programs nationwide.

The strength of the Byrne JAG program is in its impact across the criminal justice system, from law enforcement to prosecution and courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, program planning, evaluation, technology improvement, and crime victim and witness initiatives. The COPS Office and its corresponding programs provide invaluable resources and technical assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies, keeping our communities safe. Sufficient funding is critical to ensuring that law enforcement has the resources necessary to effectively and efficiently protect the public, because in recent years law enforcement agencies have experienced shrinking budgets and difficult decisions concerning operational readiness and the number of officers on patrol. With tensions between community and police at an all-time high, it is critical that we adequately fund these programs so police departments nationwide have the necessary resources to be able to engage with their communities to prevent crime, instead of just having to respond from call to call.

We appreciate the difficulty you face in appropriating adequate resources for the programs under your jurisdiction, and we thank you for your work. Support for the Byrne JAG and COPS programs is imperative to the safety of our communities. These programs supplement the manpower and incentivize the collaboration across agencies necessary to build upon successful crime reduction efforts over the past 20 years. For these reasons, we respectfully request that you include strong funding for the Byrne JAG and COPS programs, especially the COPS Hiring program, in the FY2017 CJS appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Dave Reichert  
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress
Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick  
Member of Congress

Alma Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress

Dave Scott  
Member of Congress

Barbara Comstock  
Member of Congress

Curt Clawson  
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

Cedric Richmond  
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Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson  
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Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Mark Walker  
Member of Congress
Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Stephen Lynch  
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Steve Chabot  
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Chris Smith  
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Mike Fitzpatrick  
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Pedro R. Pierluisi  
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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

John Conyers  
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Wm. Lacy Clay  
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William R. Keating  
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Mike Rogers  
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Jeff Miller  
Member of Congress

Peter King  
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John Lewis  
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Dina Titus  
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John Yarmuth  
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Elizabeth H. Esty  
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David B. McKinley, P.E.  
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Ted Lieu  
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Mark Takai  
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Denny Heck  
Member of Congress

Ryan A. Costello  
Member of Congress